

Ecologically and Socially Sustainable Education: Creating a Sustainable World.

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Abstract.

The purpose of ecologically and socially sustainable education is to teach the skills and to impart knowledge necessary for the establishment and perpetuation of ecologically and socially sustainable society. The first step, for the purposes of ecologically and socially sustainable education, is to determine what an "ecologically and socially sustainable society" is. This is achieved by reconciling and unifying of *all* individual ideas that there ever might exist of what should constitute an "ecologically and socially sustainable society" into a unified model--a model acceptable to all because it is based on all knowledge and data pertinent to the subject, and because everyone can participate in the modeling process. This unification in a model is necessary in order to avoid costly resolving ("costly" in terms of time, energy, resources, and, not infrequently, lives) of differences among those ideas in real life. This ongoing process of "reconciling and unifying of all individual ideas" into a unified model in itself would be *the* "ecologically and socially sustainable education" to the participants, because this unification process of all the diverse ideas would show what ideas would be more sustainable than others (or not), and *why* this should be so; in order to design a world that they would like to live in the participants would learn everything necessary for this while participating in the designing process. They would have an active interest in doing so--they would be designing a life for themselves that they would like to have.

Keywords.

"ecologically and socially sustainable education", "ecological and social sustainability", sustainable, sustainability, education, "*The Path of Least Resistance*", "Robert Fritz", "Mahayana philosophy"

Introduction.

It could be argued that for humans to live sustainably is the optimal way to exist, a way that would generate the least amount of suffering for humans and many other beings who share this world with them. The principal idea expressed in this paper--the purposeful and conscious designing of our collective sustainable future collaboratively--is based on the philosophy of [Mahayana](#) and the practical approach to creating of desired results as it is formulated in *The Path of Least Resistance* by Robert Fritz (Fritz 1984).

At present there are many people who know what they do not want in their lives, but a very few who have formed a definite image of what their ideal life should be. There are much fewer people who would like have their future to be sustainable, and there exist a myriad definitions of "sustainability", many of which are not even compatible with each other, and a lot of time resources, and energy are being wasted on trying to reconcile the differences among those definitions in real time and space. All this waste could be avoided by reconciling these differences in a model, i. e. by deciding the viability of any idea by modeling in virtuality "concrete" applications of any ideas in consideration.

Even people who do not "believe" in sustainability could use the modeling process to see how their ideas of what an ideal world should be like in a model. I contend that by using the modeling process continually, even using input of people who do not "believe" in sustainability, eventually the result would have to, inevitably, be a portrayal of a sustainable world, because no other way other than sustainable could ever be as justifiable, nor any other results could ever be as elegant and parsimonious as sustainable ones.

The modeling of the ideal, would never be in any way influenced by any ideologies, creeds, or personalities of the in-putters Only the realization that we all have to share the Earth together with as little conflict as possible would matter. Only the relevance of ideas to creating of the ideal would matter.

The modeling of an ideal future could be used even in small scale situations in conflict

resolutions and also in deciding the future of smaller social units.

What is "ecologically and socially sustainable education"?

Ecologically and socially sustainable education helps to establish and maintain an ecologically and socially sustainable society. It is a part of designing of an ecologically and socially sustainable world. Participants learn what they have to learn about what "ecological and social sustainability" is, while designing their own ideal lives themselves as they go--learning what they need to learn.

What is an "ecological and social sustainability"?

There are many definitions of what constitutes "sustainability", let alone "ecological and social sustainability". Some are less abstruse than others, but there is not a single one definition of "sustainability" that would satisfy everybody.

Therefore, in order to be able to define "ecological and social sustainability", the best definition of the term would be actually showing in a model what an ideal sustainable state of any geopolitical entity ought to be by collectively inputting individual definitions into models and reconciling the differences among them by representing "concrete" portrayals of the optimal sustainable states of those entities.

(All the above is further elaborated upon below).

The need for a model that would show what an "ecologically and socially sustainable" world should look like.

The unification of all ideas about what our collective future should be like in a model is necessary in order to avoid costly resolving (costly in terms of time, energy, resources, and--not infrequently--lives) of differences among those ideas in real life.

It is necessary to have a good definition of "sustainable" for working purposes. Only by modeling of this definition we can get definitions of "sustainable" that actually would be "visible"--made "visible"--by "concrete" applications of "sustainable" in a model.

To reconcile all the various definitions of "ecological and social sustainability" (and to unify all ideas about what our collective future should be like generally) I propose that all of these are used to construct a model that would portray what an "ecologically and

socially sustainable" (henceforth "sustainable" in this paper, for brevity sake) society, or any social entity of any size--from a local community to the whole Earth encompassing humanity. In such a model it would be possible to "see" what the each definition of "ecological and social sustainability" ("sustainability" from now on, but let us not forget that "sustainability" should be a holistic concept, that demands all of its components to be thoroughly "sustainable" themselves) would look like when translated from the abstract to a "visible" representation of "sustainability", if in virtuality only. In this way each of the definitions' viability could be "seen" and evaluated against all other definitions and against all knowledge that is important in deciding what is "sustainable" and what is not so (e. g.--availability and distribution of resources, particular societal compositions and traits of particular societal groups, and such).

It is important to stress that this modeling should not be about "problem solving"! According to Robert Fritz in *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984) the process of creating the results that we want to have in our lives cannot depend on "problem solving", because we never, really, run out of problems ever, and even, very unlikely, when we solve all of our problems, we still might not be even close to having what we really want to have, especially, if we don't know what that might be. The modeling has to focus on the results that we do want to have in our common reality.

The resultant emerging portrayal of an ideal state of things would not depend on the personalities of people inputting the model--only ideas would compete with each other. The process would not be hampered by the prestige, or the lack thereof, of people inputting the modeling process. Nor could anyone personally profit from taking a part in the process. The "profit" would lie in making it possible for all to design and to strive for the optimal home ever for all involved possibly obtainable with no one excluded from the process of doing so.

In essence the shaping of human society on any level, from a local community government to global concerns, driven by the desire to approach the ideal, would supersede, eventually, any form of government in existence currently, because once a justified, unified objective would be identified, the actions to achieve it would always be defensible, and because no one ever would be excluded from the political action.

There is a qualitative difference between the way the society would be governed by using the modeling process and the way politics is being conducted currently. Today our future is being shaped by a very small portion of humanity, excluding a huge proportion of people who cannot influence their future significantly. Much discontent thus generated will create problems in the future, problems that will be resolved to the satisfaction of only a few again--the number of problems will be increasing till they will be "solved", for a while, by some major societal catastrophe.

In contrast, no one ever would be excluded from modeling the ideal state of the world--all who would care to live in a better world would always be able to improve on the ideal. No one's effort in modeling of the ideal and in contributing to achieving of the ideal would be wasted--actions small and actions big will all flow coherently into the realization of the ideal--both in the model and in reality. Differences that there are among people and cause so much unhappiness in real life could be dealt with, could be resolved in the model, in most cases preemptively.

Sustainable education springs from the need of bridging the current reality with the desired state of affairs.

With a visible, collaboratively being created, and generally upon agreed model of what our ideal common reality should actually be, it would always be possible to see what the discrepancy between what is desired and what actually exists currently, in relation to the ideal, is. This discrepancy between the desired goal and what there is in reality (in respects to the desired goal) alone would be the driving force of sustainable education (I am alluding to Fritz's description in *The Path of Least Resistance*--Fritz 1984--of how "structural tension" between the desired objective and its "current reality" drives the creation of desired results).

Sustainable education would always makes sense, because at each point the whichever particular knowledge that is being acquired is clearly "seen" (by comparing the modeled desired reality with the current reality) as being necessary to know in order to achieve that which is desired.

The start of the modeling process itself would be the start of sustainable education.

Conclusion.

Most problems that humanity experiences are human made, and this fact implies a hope--it might well be within human powers to effect the healing of our world.

The "old" way of doing things will never do; obviously the "old" way got us to where we are now. We cannot look back trying to find solutions to our present problems, because any "solutions" from the past helped to get us exactly to where we are now. Any solutions based on humanity's experience from the past that have been tried have been proven ineffective, so far; ineffective in trying to deal with issues that really matter--fulfilling basic human needs satisfactorily--QED.

We have to look, as if, into the future for solutions, more precisely--we have to design our future to our collective satisfaction, and then we can work to make this designed future our reality. It is very important to know what it actually is that we desire to have.

Alone the existence of a constantly updated, evolving model of an ideal state of the Earth would greatly improve even our current political process by "seeing" to what degree each political decision would, or would not, help to achieve the ideal state.

References.

Mahayana:

Mahayana and Ecological and Social Sustainability.

(The following reflects author's own personal understanding of the terms "Mahayana" and "Bodhisattva").

Mahayana is a view that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all phenomena across all time and space (no phenomenon is an isolated "island"), and that any one being's well-being depends on the well-being of every other being across all time and all space.

A Bodhisattva is one who strives to realize the ideal of Mahayana, and therefore regards the well-being of all other beings as important as one's own.

To live ecologically and socially sustainably means to acknowledge the need of all other beings to live well also.

The need for living ecologically and socially sustainably is implicit in Mahayana.

An aspiring Bodhisattva would help all beings to be mentally and physically optimally well, and therefore an aspiring Bodhisattva would promote the way of living ecologically and socially sustainably in all places and in all times.

A traditional Mahayana dedication--affirming, focusing on what the actual ultimate goal of life should be:

"May all beings benefit optimally everywhere and always".

(A philosophy quite suitable for achieving an ecologically and socially sustainable world.)

Mahayana's noble goal is to cause all beings to become ultimately happy, with no beings left behind in suffering. Thus Mahayana philosophy might be best suitable as an ideology for creating and maintaining of ecologically and socially sustainable society, because Mahayana's concern is the ultimate happiness of all beings, transcending all differences--be those differences in species, ideologies, creeds, classes, and any such differences--that divide all beings. All beings' welfare is important in Mahayana's view, as it is in true sustainability, where all members of a system are important.

To live ecologically and socially sustainably does not imply a complete abolition of all beings' suffering which is the goal of Mahayana--that would be impossible to achieve with our mere "earthly" means--, but to live sustainably would prevent most of unnecessary suffering from happening, at least.

Fritz, Robert

***The Path of Least Resistance*, Salem, MA, DMA, Inc., 1984, ISBN: 0-930641-00-0**

The *Path of Least Resistance* by Robert Fritz (Fritz 1984) teaches how to create results that one desires in one's life; it is based on the common sense observation that it is impossible to achieve something that one doesn't know what it actually is. In order to achieve a result one first has to know what it is that one wants to achieve in as small a detail as possible, or, at least, to know what one wants to achieve so well that when one would encounter this goal realized, one would recognize it without a fail. This is very important in achieving sustainability--as it is today, we are professing that sustainability is what we want to achieve, with a little or no consensus among ourselves as to what this "sustainability" should actually be! It is my conviction that it will be impossible for us to ever become sustainable, unless we agree on what "sustainable"/"sustainability" is.

The process is described in the *The Path of Least Resistance* as "creating", because it concerns bringing into reality results that might not have existed ever before, bringing into being results as if out of nothing (the foregoing is loosely paraphrased from the book--*The Path of Least Resistance* by Robert Fritz--Fritz 1984).